

Finally, Dr. Welsing trots out the standard beliefs regarding prisons and the confinement of Black men—that they, too, breed homosexuality. Writing of an ex-prisoner patient whom she identifies as an example of twenty generations of racist abuse, Welsing confides in us that he said:

"It is easier to endure the life on the inside than to try to put up with the pressures of being a man, a husband, and a father in the street." The intent of racist programming had been achieved: "Give up trying to be a Black man. Why not be a woman?" Many Black males have answered unconsciously, "Why not!" The braided and curled hair, the earrings and bracelets, the midriff tops, the cinch waisted pants, the flowered underwear, the high-heeled shoes with platforms and the pocket-books are all behavioral answers to the above. They say in loud and clear language, "White man, I will never come after you. I cannot run in my high-heels—you know that. And I may mess up my hair."

Welsing's reasoning is so flawed, outdated, and totally reactionary that I am curiously reminded of the child who found himself faced with having to tell the emperor he's wearing none of the beautiful clothes that his court is leading him to believe he's wearing—or, as in a more recent example, of the discovery that Milli Vanilli didn't really sing a note of their hit song "Girl You Know It's True."

I suspect, however, that if Freud had been a neurotic, Black nationalist colored woman living in the noxious racism of America, out of desperation he might very well have formulated homophobic and heterosexist theories such as Dr. Welsing's. Even among the oppressed there is a disturbing need for a convenient "other" to vent anger against, to blame, to disparage, to denigrate. Such behavior is surely as

detrimental as any an oppressor can exercise against the oppressed. There is no excuse for such behavior just as there is no credibility for Dr. Welsing's theories regarding sexuality. At best, her views reinforce the rampant homophobia and heterosexism that have paralyzed the Black liberation struggle. She widens the existing breach between Black gays and lesbians and their heterosexual counterparts, offering no bridges for joining our differences. And throughout it all, she does not foster an understanding of our differences as she would lead us to believe, but instead offers justification for homophobia and heterosexism to continue disabling Black communities.

Despite the popularity of Dr. Welsing's views among many Black nationalists and some who claim Afrocentricity, Black gays and lesbians and advocates of diversity can take sustenance and inspiration from the words of Cheryl Clarke, who in her 1983 essay from *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), "The Failure to Transform: Homophobia in the Black Community," firmly urges us:

Open and proud Black gay men and lesbians must take an assertive stand against the blatant homophobia expressed by members of the Black intellectual and political community who consider themselves custodians of the revolution. For if we will not tolerate the homophobia of the culture in general, we cannot tolerate it from Black people, no matter what their positions in the Black liberation movement. Homophobia is a measure of how far removed we are from the psychological transformations we so desperately need to engender. The expression of homophobic sentiments, the threatening political postures assumed by Black radicals and progressives of the nationalist/communist ilk, and the seeming lack of any willingness to under-